

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method ~~Method~~ for checking for patient information in a data stream in a medical records system comprising:

transferring the data stream in the medical records system;

extracting a portion of data from the data stream;

automatically comparing the portion of data with a predetermined sequence in a database;

automatically determining whether the portion of data comprises patient information based on the comparison; and

modifying the portion of data if it comprises patient information so that the modified portion of the data is independent of the patient information.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein transferring the data stream in the medical records system comprises generating a report comprising the data stream.

3. (Original) The method claim 1, wherein transferring the data stream in the medical records system comprises inputting the data stream into the medical records system.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein transferring the data stream in the medical records system comprises sending the data stream to a peripheral device.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein extracting a portion of data from the data stream comprises parsing the data stream.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein automatically comparing the portion of data with a predetermined sequence in a database comprises automatically comparing the portion of data with a predetermined format.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein automatically comparing the portion of data with a predetermined sequence in a database and determining whether the portion of data comprises patient information based on the comparison comprises using rules to specify a sequence of characters that includes patient information.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the rules comprise an expert system.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising notifying a user of the portion of data which comprises patient information and suggesting options to modify the portion of data which comprises patient information, and

wherein modifying the portion of data comprises manually selecting one of the options to modify the portion of data.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein modifying the portion of data comprises modifying content of the portion of data.

11.-12. (Canceled)

13. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the patient information is selected from the group consisting of name, postal address, e-mail address, telephone number, social security number, and birthday.

14.-18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) A computer-based system for monitoring patient information in a medical records system, said computer-based system comprising:

a transfer device for transferring a data stream in the medical records system;

a memory storing predetermined sequences of patient information; and

a processor being coupled to the memory and the transfer device, the processor comparing a portion of the data stream with at least one predetermined sequence in the memory, ~~[[and]]~~ determining whether the portion of the data stream comprises patient information based on the comparison, and modifying the portion of the data stream so that the modified portion of the data stream is independent of the patient information if the portion of the data stream comprises patient information.

20. (Original) The computer-based system of claim 19, wherein the transfer device comprises an input device.

21. (Original) The computer-based system of claim 19, wherein the data stream comprises a generated report; and

wherein the transfer device comprises an output device.

22. (Original) The computer-based system of claim 19, wherein the memory further comprises rules; and wherein the processor comparing a portion of data with at least one predetermined sequence in the memory and determining whether the portion of the data stream comprises patient information based on the comparison comprises using the rules to specify a sequence of characters that includes patient information.

23.-25. (Canceled)

26. (Original) The computer-based system of claim 19, wherein the processor notifies a user of the portions of the data stream comprising patient information and suggesting alternatives for the portions of the data stream comprising patient information.

27. (Currently Amended) A computer-based system for monitoring patient information in a medical records system, said computer-based system comprising:
- a transfer device for transferring a data stream in the medical records system;
 - a memory storing predetermined sequences of patient information; and
 - a processor being coupled to the memory and the transfer device, the processor determining at least one characteristic of the data stream, determining whether a portion of data stream comprises patient information based on the characteristic, and modifying the portion of data stream if it comprises patient information so that the modified portion of the data stream is independent of the patient information.
28. (Original) The computer-based system of 27, wherein the characteristic comprises whether the data stream is a particular form.
29. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein modifying the portion of data comprises replacing the portion of the data with data independent of the patient information.
30. (New) The method of claim 29, wherein the portion of data comprises a plurality of characters; and
- wherein modifying the portion of data comprises replacing at least some of the plurality of characters with a same character.
31. (New) The method of claim 30, wherein the same character comprises "X".
32. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein modifying the portion of data comprises deleting the portion of the data.
33. (New) The method of claim 9, wherein modifying the portion of data comprises replacing the portion of the data with data independent of the patient information.

34. (New) The computer-based system of claim 19, wherein modifying the portion of the data stream comprises replacing the portion of the data stream with data independent of the patient information.

35. (New) The computer-based system of claim 19, wherein modifying the portion of the data stream comprises deleting the portion of the data stream.

36. (New) The computer-based system of claim 27, wherein modifying the portion of the data stream comprises replacing the portion of the data stream with data independent of the patient information.

37. (New) The computer-based system of claim 27, wherein modifying the portion of the data stream comprises deleting the portion of the data stream.